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SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: 2007 TIP REPORT AND TIER 3 ACTION PLAN
DELIVERED

REF: A. STATE 81216

[1](#)B. STATE 79564

Classified By: DCM Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff delivered the 2007 Trafficking-in-Persons Report and the Tier 3 short-term action plan for Bahrain (reftels) June 12 to MFA Assistant Undersecretary for Coordination and Follow Up and head of the Anti-Trafficking Task Force Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, who expressed his disappointment at the news of Bahrain's placement in Tier 3. He mentioned a speech he had delivered June 7 as guest of honor at an annual fund-raiser dinner for an NGO that assists migrant workers, in which he described action in several areas the GOB had taken over the last year to combat trafficking. He said that he had been proud about how much the government had done and was honored to speak about its achievements. Shaikh Abdul Aziz made clear that even though he is disappointed about the Tier 3 ranking, Bahrain is not making efforts to combat trafficking because of the annual TIP report or merely to avoid Tier 3. He said that the government is taking steps against TIP because of the importance of the issue, commenting it is simply "the right thing to do" in light of international standards on human rights.

[1](#)2. (C) Shaikh Abdul Aziz also called attention to a speech made by Crown Prince Shaikh Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa at the 96th International Labor Organization Assembly in Geneva on June 11. In his address, the CP had announced that a regional dialogue on workers' issues would be held in Bahrain, the first dialogue of its kind in the Gulf region. The CP had said that Bahrain was committed to protecting the rights of foreign workers under international law and principles of human rights and called on all concerned stakeholders in the issue of migrant workers from labor-sending and labor-receiving countries, including workers, employers, and government officials, to participate in the regional dialogue.

[1](#)3. (C) Shaikh Abdul Aziz recognized that enactment of the anti-trafficking legislation had been delayed longer than hoped, but that it had now left the hands of the executive branch to be taken up by parliament. He attributed the delay to the government trying to simultaneously focus on other equally important and related labor reform legislation. He said that labor reform fits into the overall strategy for combating trafficking since new labor legislation will cover household workers for the first time and over time will abolish the sponsorship system. He said that once both of these pieces of legislation are enacted and begin being enforced, Bahrain should have in place all the minimum standards to qualify for Tier 1. Bahrain will do its part to be leaders in the region to defend the rights of expatriate workers, with or without U.S. recognition of Bahrain's

accomplishments related to trafficking.

14. (C) Regarding the action plan, Shaikh Abdul Aziz said that he would convene a core group of the Anti-Trafficking Task Force, including representatives from the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, the Public Prosecution, and immigration officials from the Ministry of Interior, on June 21 or 22 to discuss targeted efforts to show progress on items in the action plan in the next 60 days. He pledged to send a copy of the 2007 TIP report to concerned ministries right away so they could begin to generate discussion points in the lead up to next week's meeting. In terms of areas in which there could reasonably be progress in the limited time frame, he mentioned focusing on information about recent prosecutions and reviewing arrest and deportation policies. He reminded Poloff that on May 29 the Ministry of Social Development had hosted a symposium, highlighted on local television and in the press, on efforts in Bahrain to combat trafficking as part of the GOB's public awareness campaign. (Note: DCM and Poloff attended this one-day event, which was more widely attended than any previous event on TIP, with 70-80 representatives from civil society, foreign embassies, government, the legal profession, and business in attendance.)

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